

Safe Sleeping for Your Baby

When you put your baby down to sleep, here are three important things to think about...

1 How Should I Position My Baby for Sleep?

- ◆ **BACK TO SLEEP:** Always place your baby on her/his back to sleep (unless you are instructed not to for other health reasons by your baby's doctor).
- ◆ **Avoid putting your baby on his/her side or stomach** because this increases the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- ◆ **The use of special devices such as wedges and cushions when positioning your baby is NOT recommended.**
- ◆ **Remember to put your baby on her/his tummy ("tummy time") while awake and supervised.**



2 Where Will My Baby Sleep?

- ◆ Experts agree that **the safest place for your baby to sleep is in your room within arm's reach.**
- ◆ **You may also choose to put the baby's crib in her/his room.**
- ◆ Sometimes mothers who breastfeed fall asleep with their baby in their bed. Some parents will choose to sleep with their baby in bed with them. Experts do not agree on the potential benefits of sharing a bed with your baby. Experts do agree, however, that **there are many factors that can make sharing a bed with your baby unsafe** (see "How Do I Avoid Especially Dangerous Situations...").



3 How Can I Make My Baby's Bed Safe?

Your baby's bed should have:

- ◆ **Railings that are no more than 2³/₈ inches apart** (you can't fit a soda can through them).
- ◆ **A firm mattress** that fits snugly in the frame;
- ◆ **A fitted sheet** that is tight around the mattress;
- ◆ **No heavy blankets, quilts, duvets, stuffed animals, bumper pads, sheepskins, etc.**

Also, keep in mind:

- ◆ **Make sure your baby's head and face remain uncovered** during sleep.
- ◆ **Do not let your baby get overheated.**
- ◆ **Keep the room temperature comfortable** for a lightly clothed adult.
- ◆ **Your baby should be in a one-piece sleeper with nothing over her/him.**
- ◆ **If it's cold, layer the baby's clothing** (for example, add a tee-shirt and socks under their sleeper) and use only a light receiving blanket, if necessary.

Never smoke or allow anyone else to smoke in the car, house or anywhere else your baby will be!

How Do I Avoid Especially Dangerous Situations if I Choose to Share My Bed with my Baby?

Experts agree that bed-sharing can be unsafe.

- ◆ Never sleep with your baby or put your baby down to sleep on a waterbed, recliner, futon or sofa.
- ◆ Always position your baby on her/his back.
- ◆ Babies should never sleep with adults who use drugs, alcohol or medications that cause sleepiness.
- ◆ Never expose your baby to smoke.

Remember, Adult Beds Aren't Made for Babies

- ◆ Never let your baby sleep with other children, even if you are present.
- ◆ Never sleep with your baby if you are overly tired or excessively overweight.

Adult Beds

- ◆ Always use a firm mattress that fits tightly against the headboard and *away from the wall* because babies can slip between the wall and bed and suffocate.
- ◆ Never use heavy blankets, pillows or comforters that could cover your baby's head and face.

Safe Sleep Committee

Robert White, MD—Chair
Julia Brillhart, RN, MSN—Executive Director, Indiana Perinatal Network
Judith Ganser, MD, MPH—Director, Maternal Child Health Services, Indiana State Department of Health
Nora Geissler, RN—Community Liaison, Indiana Perinatal Network
Deborah Givan, MD—Riley Hospital for Children and Chair, SIDS Council Advisory Board, Indiana State Department of Health
Marsha Glass, RN, BSN, IBCLC—Infant Feeding Specialist
Barbara Himes—SIDS & Infant Loss Support Coordinator, Indiana Perinatal Network
Maureen McLean, RN, MSN—State Perinatal Network Liaison, Indiana State Department of Health
James McKenna, PhD—Notre Dame Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory

SIDS & Infant Loss Support

Ph: 317.818.9486

Indiana Family Helpline

Ph: 1.800.433.0746

Assistance in locating services before, during, or after pregnancy. Available to providers and to the public.



An alliance of hundreds of individuals and organizations across Indiana who are committed to the belief that every baby in our state should be born healthy and into a safe and nurturing home.

